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Statement submitted by Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu Uddyan, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu-Uddyan's mission is poverty alleviation and social development through microfinance programs. With three decades of experience, we have learnt that microfinance alone is not sufficient for empowerment; generating employment through resource mobilization is another key component that can harmonize microfinance and social development. To achieve this, VSSU started promoting livelihoods projects among low-income families.

Our responsibility towards society has grown since we were awarded Special Consultative Status in 2011.

Significant Achievements

After receiving this status, the organization has focused on "Poverty alleviation and employment generation through skill-based education for all". Besides expansion of microfinance services involving 130,000 direct beneficiaries in 710 villages of 10 blocks of deprived coastal area, the Sunderbans, we are also contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) intensively in the following ways:

We organized the International Brotherhood Conference 2012, a 6-day long congregation where 30+ global representatives from 4 continents and 50,000+ community members/NGO practitioners focused on MDGs during each day's academic session.

We established 2 secondary schools to educate children from low-income populations. One school is 100 percent free of cost A+ grade boarding school for poor and meritorious students of our districts. We are expanding our oldest free basic education program through 10 crèches (#750+ children per annum) in 10 blocks of the Sunderbans.

Our Oceanic Library received a prestigious Certificate award as Best Models in India, during the India Public Libraries Conference in Delhi, March 2015. The library provides thousands of books and scholarships to students, and offers free classes by expert faculty using advanced technologies.

We received authorization to start B.ED College (Residential Teacher Training Institute for # 200 graduates per annum) beginning May 2016.

We started Bengal's Largest Residential Skill Training School for unemployed youth, women, and school dropouts, with 100 percent placement assistance, and targeting #4.000 new hires within the next 2 years. Special Government skills training programmes will start imminently targeting 2,000 youth per annum in 10 trades.

For the environment, we developed with local farmers various initiatives including social forestry (600,000 trees planted over 140 kilometers), horticulture, organic farming, renewable energy and eco-tourism. 27 acres of water bodies are used for rainwater harvesting, fisheries and allied programmes.

We operate two free health centers, eye center, ambulance services, and appointed a female doctor who regularly visits remote villages. Our crèches ensure health and hygiene of mothers and children. We constructed 2,000+ free-of-cost

latrines in seven blocks, and we have plans to establish a community hospital in coming years. We are providing food, clothes, medicines (average 100 families monthly) to disabled elderly persons since inception.

In addition, 350 interns and visitors from 54 countries have visited to experience/study our self-sustainable, replicable small savings-based credit approach. Our Founder/CEO (Ashoka Awardee) appointed as policy-maker by the India Planning Commission. In 2013 he visited 7 top universities in the United States to share his innovative, sustainable development ideas, which seek to include the excluded members of society.